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ABSTRACT

The primary objective of the Success Stories: From Learning to Leadership project, which was conducted by a private consulting firm, was to provide technical assistance to the Pennsylvania Department of Education's Bureau of Adult Basic and Literacy Education (ABLE) in its efforts to select and recognize the achievements of 10 outstanding ABLE students in 1996. The project's staff edited the nominations, made the arrangements necessary for the winners to participate in the national Commission on Adult Basic Education (COABE) conference at which the award ceremony was held, handled the required payments for the conference, prepared and published 2,000 copies of a booklet profiling the 10 outstanding students, and provided each of the 9 ABLE programs with award winners with 200 flyers for promotional purposes. In the booklet, which was titled "Learning to Leadership," the 10 award winners emphasized their achievements as a direct result of the adult education they had received. (The booklet profiling individual award winners is included.) (MN)

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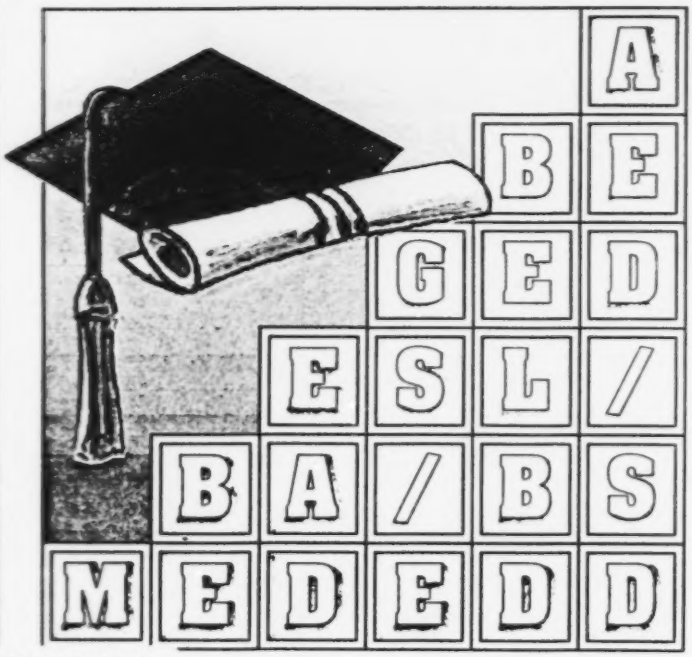
1996 SUCCESS STORIES

Learning to Leadership



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ABLE Achievement Award

Bureau of Adult Basic and Literacy Programs

Pennsylvania Department of Education Honors Outstanding Adult Students in Success Stories

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FY 1995-1996

#99-6001 **$19,500**

Sherry Royce, Project Director

final report
final report
final report

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ABSTRACT

Title: SUCCESS STORIES: From Learning to Leadership

Project No: 98-6001 **Funding:** $19,500

Project Director: Dr. Sherry Royce **Telephone:** (717) 569-1993

Contact Person: Dr. Sherry Royce **Telephone:** (717) 569-1993

Agency: Royce & Royce, Inc. 1938 Crooked Oak Drive, Lancaster, PA 7601

PURPOSE:

SUCCESS STORIES provides technical assistance to the Pennsylvania Department of Education's (PDE's) Bureau of Adult Basic and Literacy Education (ABLE) in selecting and recognizing ten Outstanding ABLE students via an awards ceremony and publication of the SUCCESS STORIES booklet and flyers. The awards ceremony for this year's project was held in conjunction with the National COABE conference in Pittsburgh.

PROCEDURES:

Project staff edited the nominations, made arrangements for winners' participation at COABE '96 and handled payments for the conference. Project staff prepared and published 2000 Success Stories Booklets. Every interested sponsor of a Success Stories outstanding student received 200 Flyers for promotional purposes. Project staff conducted the project evaluation.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS:

This year's award winners stressed their achievements as a direct result of the adult education they had received and in two cases demonstrated their new found prowess in reading and writing.

COMMENTS:

The Success Stories project was faced with multiple difficulties this year, including the change of venue, the death of one of the outstanding students and a delay of approvals for the Success Stories Booklet. Nevertheless, the award ceremony that took place in Pittsburgh was gratifying to both outstanding students and ABLE staff alike, the Booklet was released and distributed and the Flyers that were produced with the students' stories will aid programs in their promotional endeavors.

PRODUCTS:

A Final Report, 2000 Success Stories Booklets and 200 flyers were provided to the nine programs with Success Stories award winners desiring them.

DESCRIPTORS:

FINAL REPORT

SUCCESS STORIES: From Learning to Leadership

A 353 Special Project FY 1995-96

Funded by PDE: $19, 500 # 98-6001

BACKGROUND

Ever since 1978, Pennsylvania has been honoring its outstanding Adult Basic Education (ESL and GED) students at an awards ceremony and legislative luncheon at the Pennsylvania Association for Adult and Continuing Education's (PAACE's) annual Midwinter Conference. This awards ceremony followed by the publication of the Success Stories Booklet and local program flyers constitute one of the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) Bureau of Adult Basic and Literacy Education's (ABLE's) best awareness vehicles.

This year neither the awards ceremony nor the publication of the Success Stories Booklet took place as in the past. The ceremony was held May 17, 1996 as part of the national Commission on Adult Basic Education (COABE) conference. Approval of copy was delayed at state level and the book was finally published one month later. The award ceremony that took place in Pittsburgh was gratifying to both outstanding students and ABLE staff alike and the Flyers that were produced with the students' stories will aid programs in their promotional endeavors.

PROJECT GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The primary goal of this project, providing assistance to PDE in conducting the award ceremonies for the 1995 students of the year, was accomplished.

THE SELECTION PROCESS

Every local agency funded by PDE under Section 322/353 or Act 143 is eligible to submit one candidate for outstanding student of the year and this year 40 nominations were received by PDE's Division of ABLE. The criteria for nomination emphasized students' career plans and accomplishments as a result of their education and nominating agencies' innovative programming to meet students needs.

All nominations were rewritten by project staff to insure the information was contained on a single page and gave minimal evidence of the nominee's name or program origin. The Success Stories Selection Committee met in early December.

Committee member included:

Cynthia L. Butler, Vice President
Corporate Equal Opportunity Program Manager
Dauphin Deposit Bank

Cheryl Harmon, Resource Specialist
PDE, Bureau of ABLE

Caroline Henry
Harrisburg School District

Ella Morin, Special Programs Director
PDE, Bureau of ABLE

Sherry Royce, Project Director
Success Stories

Peggy Greene, Instructor
Harrisburg State Hospital

John Heiser, Supervisor
Lebanon Adult Learning Center

Paula Smith, Coordinator
Region 6 Staff Development Center

Frank Paul, Instructor GED
Red Land Community Action Program

Mike Wilson, Adult Literacy
Central Susquehanna IU. 16

Panel members rated each candidate according to nine selection criteria and determined their top fifteen choices. The ten nominees receiving the highest number of panel member votes from among the top fifteen were chosen Outstanding Students of 1994.

SUCCESS STORY winners for 1995 and their programs are:

George F. Benditt Sr.	Bradford-Wyoming County Literacy Council
Margaret George	Luzerne County Community College IDEA/Adult Literacy Training & Assistance Program
Elaine Handline	Eagleville Hospital
Bruce W. Harris	Connelley Technical Institute
Khamphanh Soulinhavong	Scranton Council for Literacy Advance (SCOLA)
Linda Mallery	Altoona Area School District
Sister Yolanda Martinez	Erie Adult Learning Center
William Torres	Northampton Community College Adult Education
Sue Virgili	Intermediate Unit 1 Adult Learning Center
Tracey White	Germantown Women's Education Project

COABE '96 CONFERENCE ACTIVITIES

This year the outstanding students supplied photographs and negatives to the project coordinator who had them blown up into 5X7s and mounted for display at the COABE conference. Following a luncheon attended by students, program staff, state staff and PAACE officers, the outstanding students were presented at a special session and told their stories. Each student received a certificate and plaque from the Pennsylvania Department of Education, Bureau of ABLE and a savings bonds from the Dauphin Deposit Bank. Informal photographs were taken during the luncheon and at the awards ceremony and a group picture was taken following the luncheon. These photographs were sent to the students and their programs.

CONFERENCE EVALUATION

Believing it to be a privilege to direct this project, every attempt was made by SUCCESS STORIES project director, Sherry Royce, to provide the outstanding students and their directors with efficient, courteous and prompt service. In the follow-up evaluation by program director, one director mentioned difficulty in finding the room where the luncheon was scheduled, another was delighted that pictures were sent since none of their group took a camera along. All seemed satisfied with the conference arrangements.

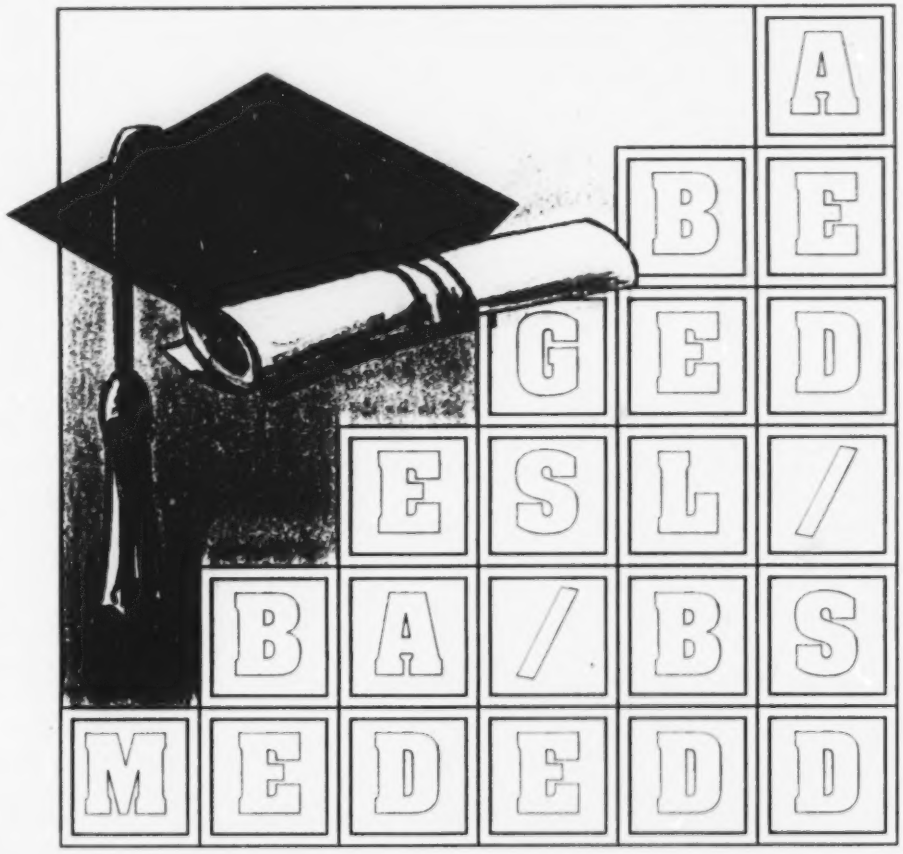
SUCCESS STORIES PUBLICATIONS

Some 2,000 copies of *SUCCESS STORIES* were distributed to all PDE Bureau of ABLE programs and special projects; ABLE special task forces, the Pennsylvania Department of Labor Single Point Of Contact (SPOC) programs, and advocates of adult education in the Commonwealth. In addition, all members of the Pennsylvania legislature and all Pennsylvania members of the US Congress will receive the Booklet as well as state departments of adult education, and adult education national and regional clearinghouses.

Each award winning adult learner and their program director will receive ten copies of the Success Stories Booklet. The programs will also receive 200 promotional flyers featuring their student. Ten copies will go to Pennsylvania's five Adult Education Professional Development Centers and some 50 copies to AdvancE, Pennsylvania's ABLE clearinghouse. Five copies of the Final Report will be provided to PDE, Bureau of ABLE.

1996 SUCCESS STORIES

Learning to Leadership



ACHIEVEMENT
ABLE
Achievement
Award
EXCELLENCE
AWARD ON
LEARNING

Bureau of Adult Basic and
Literacy Education

Pennsylvania Department of Education
Honors Outstanding Adult Students in
Success Stories

COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
Tom Ridge, Governor

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Eugene W. Hickok, Secretary

Bureau of Adult Basic and Literacy Education (ABLE)
Cheryl Keenan, Director

SUCCESS STORIES SELECTION COMMITTEE

Peggy Greene, Instructor
Harrisburg State Hospital

Cheryl Harmon, Resource Specialist
Clearinghouse AdvancE

John Heisey, Supervisor
Lebanon Adult Learning Center

Caroline Henry
Harrisburg School District

Ella M. Morin, Division Chief Special Programs
PDE Bureau of ABLE

Frank W. Paul, Instructor GED
Red Land Community Action Program

Cynthia L. Butler, Vice President
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Paula Smith, Coordinator
Region 6 Staff Development Center

Michael Wilson, Adult Literacy
Central Susquehanna Intermediate Unit 16

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Pennsylvania Association for Adult and Continuing Education (PAACE)

ACHIEVEMENT
ABLE
Achievement
Award
LEARNING

Dear Reader:

With this publication, SUCCESS STORIES: From Learning to Leadership, the Pennsylvania Department of Education is proud to share the stories of Pennsylvania citizens who have discovered that through learning they can achieve their goals. Their stories affirm that education can provide the tools for individuals to become leaders in their chosen endeavors.

Through their personal efforts, and with the support of their families, friends, local communities and adult education providers, these individuals identified their needs, overcame many challenges and rose to meet their goals. For them, the joy in their achievements and the rewards of success make their efforts worthwhile. It is important that all of us join in recognizing their achievement and in supporting efforts that will improve adult literacy in our state.

It is my hope that by reading the stories in this publication you will be encouraged to promote efforts that assist our adult citizens in improving their quality of life through education. Just as these individuals met their personal challenges, we can meet the challenge of assisting all Pennsylvanians by supporting adult literacy programs and encouraging lifelong learning. All of us can be leaders for learning.

Sincerely,

Eugene W. Hickok, Secretary
Pennsylvania Department of Education

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Bruce W. Harris

"It was sheer pressure because I could not spell, read, or write at the level I needed to."

Sponsor: Alfred Fascetti,
Connelley Technical Institute

In 1991, Bruce Harris' wife, Wanda, contacted the Adult Literacy Program at Connelley and described her husband's need to spell, read and write better. This was his fifth year in the position of acting personnel manager for a food service business at the University of Pittsburgh. Bruce supervised 100 employees, which included interviewing, scheduling, hiring and firing. In his words, "It was sheer pressure because I could not spell, read, or write at the level I needed to." During his business day, Bruce would call his wife at work, asking her how to spell words and write grammatically correct sentences. If she was unavailable, he would take the work home and return it in the morning. When his company lost its food service contract to a new company, Bruce resigned. He was afraid that the new employer would find out about his limited skills. He then had to work two jobs in order to support his family.

Bruce enrolled in adult classes to learn to read, write and spell better. When he progressed from grade three to grade seven in reading, he decided to get his GED. After attending four years of evening classes, once a week during the school year, he said: "The program has given me courage, and I want to continue to improve my skills. I just don't want a piece of paper; I want to be able to compete in this world. I really appreciate the program and my tutor encourages me. When things got rough, she was right there."

Bruce's self-esteem has grown to where he can share so much more with his family. Once a week, his son Brian, who is 11-years-old, helps him with his spelling. These tutoring session foster a closeness, trust and sense of accomplishment for both. He also shares his academic accomplishments with his oldest son, Bruce Jr., who is majoring in theater at the University of Pittsburgh. Because Bruce has such determination, he is a role-model for other adult education students. He says, "Sometimes it gets difficult, but tutoring comes first." For example, he left an important contract meeting to come to his weekly tutoring class. Bruce believes that beginning at a basic skill level and then passing the GED has given him skills to survive anything.

Bruce wants others to see how improving one's academic skills can better a life. While currently pursuing jobs within the university system that promise advancement and stability, he expects to enroll in an air conditioning/refrigeration and heating course. Today, he is a custodian at the university, has been promoted twice and knows he will continue to progress professionally and personally.

Linda Mallery

"Without the Center's assistance, I would never have been able to achieve my personal, educational and career goals."

BLAIR COUNTY

Sponsors: Altoona Area School District, Jerry Valeri and Community Education Center, Vince Nedimyer

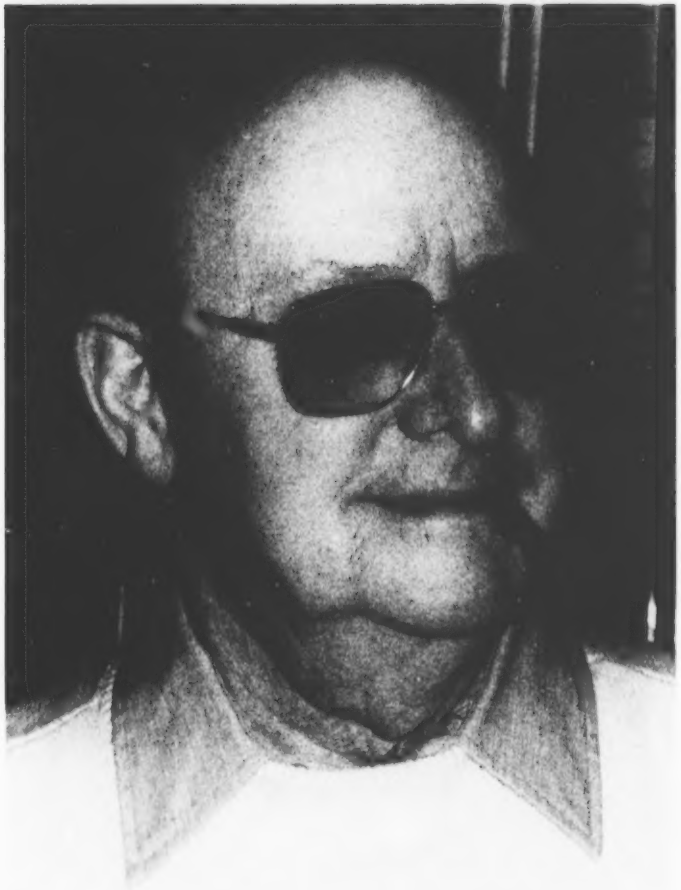
In 1971, Linda Mallery dropped out of high school at the age of 16 and married. Within three years, she and John had two beautiful children. At age 19, feeling a need to further her education, she contacted the Community Education Center. After passing the GED pretest with fairly high scores, she passed the GED test in March 1975. In 1977, Linda enrolled in a Vo-Tech Keypunch Program and was hired for a temporary position in the tax office while still attending classes.

After her third and last child was born in 1979, she stayed home to raise the children until her husband was laid-off from his job at the railroad in 1983. When he was unable to find employment, Linda took a job in a grocery store. While she enjoyed working as a cashier, her real desire was to work in a social service agency. She began volunteering at a local domestic abuse shelter, but knew that without additional education she would never be able to pursue a social service career.

Nearly 16 years later, she enrolled in the Community Education Center for the second time with her mother, Dot, who had been forced to quit school in the 8th grade. After five months of hard work and determination, her mom became the first female in a family of 14 to pursue and obtain a GED. While her mom worked on obtaining her GED, Linda worked on learning algebra and geometry in order to take and pass college entrance tests.

She passed the entrance tests with satisfactory grades and was eligible to start college classes without taking any refresher courses. At 36, she struggled to be a wife, mom, student, employee and volunteer. She obtained high grades that increased her self-confidence and capabilities. However, in her fourth semester, she was informed that the social work major was ending and she would need to change her major. After much consideration she decided to enroll in St. Francis College. She made that decision two-and-a-half -years ago. Since then she has been accepted into the National Social Work Honor Society with a 3.88 GPA and graduated in December with a BS in Social Work. She has accepted a job with the agency for which she has volunteered for the past eight years. Linda often shares her experiences of being a high school dropout, teen wife and mother, and adult learner. She encourages others to seek out adult education centers because she says, "Without the Center's assistance, I would never have been able to achieve my personal, educational and career goals."

George F. Benditt Sr.



"I would like to thank both my tutors for all the time and patience they have given to me. I hope I will not ever let them down."

BRADFORD COUNTY

Sponsor: Sherry Spencer
Bradford-Wyoming County Literacy Program

While George Benditt Sr. was serving in the Army during World War II, a friend commented that he never saw George reading his letters. When George admitted that he couldn't read or write, his friend offered to read his letters to him and help him write back home. His formal education had been a struggle for him. He had begun school in a rural area; and, after the family moved to the city, his third grade teacher recommended putting him back in first grade. George's father refused and George remained in school through 8th grade when he quit.

Fifty years later, George no longer has to depend on someone else to do his reading and writing. Learning about the Bradford-Wyoming County Literacy Program from a social worker at the Veterans Administration (VA) clinic, he enrolled in October 1991. Working with two volunteer tutors, he has completed the Laubach Way to Reading series and currently is working in the Challenger series. He credits his two volunteer tutors for their help.

Now that he can read, he wants to continue to read all the things that he missed earlier in life. He also would like to help others learn to read. George attended the 1993 and 1995 Northeast Regional Adult Literacy conferences. He has been interviewed on the radio, talked to Rotary Clubs about adult literacy and spoken at tutor training workshops. He makes a simple toy that he calls "Yankee," which he packages and gives to the literacy program to sell as a fund raiser. He encourages other new readers and wants more nonreaders to become involved with the literacy program.

George's positive outlook and determination have helped him to achieve his personal goals. He feels more contented and at peace. During the past four years, learning to read has been a priority for him. When he is at a conference or on vacation, he takes along his books and he studies. He has written several articles for New Readers News, the literacy program's student newsletter. He has written about his war experiences and has his stories published in a booklet to give to his children. He also wants to write about his experience of learning to read and how difficult that was for him.

George is a member of the Penny Promenaders, a square dancing group, and enjoys woodworking. Although he has been focusing on his reading and writing for the past four years, he still has continued to maintain his family responsibilities and to be a good neighbor in the community where he lives.

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Yolanda Martinez

"One day, I will return to my country and build a school, so that all the children, no matter how poor, will be able to have an education."

ERIE COUNTY

Yolanda Martinez was born in 1965 in a village on the outskirts of Celaya, a midsize industrial town about two hundred miles northwest of Mexico City. She was the third oldest daughter of a family with 12 children. When she completed 4th grade, her father, who held old world views of women's place in society, instructed her to stay home and learn about keeping a house. But Yolanda wanted an education, so each day after her father left for the field, she would sneak off to school. When her disobedience was discovered and she was forbidden to return to school, Yolanda taught herself at home by using her brothers' books. After studying independently for five years, she took and passed the middle and high school equivalency exams on the same day and earned her high school diploma. Although she was unable to attend college, Yolanda became a home teacher for the National Institute for Adult Education (INEA) and eventually coordinated the program for six parishes.

She accepted an invitation to come to America and study at Our Lady of Charity convent in El Paso, Texas. After working as a postulant for one year, she became a novice and traveled to convents in California and Wisconsin working with battered women and helping to establish a bilingual library. Eventually Sister Yolanda settled in Erie, Pennsylvania, at a home for court-committed girls who have drug, alcohol and/or family problems.

Sponsor: Joseph Mando
Erie Adult Learning Center

Sister Yolanda came to the Erie Adult Learning Center in August 1993 in order to pass the GED exam so she could qualify for acceptance into college. The first time she attempted the test, she failed. Despite working a rotating schedule, she attended classes as often as possible and prepared to retake the exam. The teachers at the Erie Learning Center kept her well fortified with study materials to use at home. Finally in October 1994, Sister Yolanda passed the GED exam. Soon after, she applied for and was appointed assistant unit director of the Gannondale Program for troubled young women. Her duties included supervising and training staff, as well as counseling the young women. She loves her job.

On June 24, 1995, with her family around her, Sister Yolanda took her final vows of the Order. She is enrolled at Mercyhurst College, pursuing a degree in social work and religious education. With all the success and rewards Sister Yolanda has found in this country one would think she would be content. Not Sister Yolanda! The image of the little girl not able to go to school still haunts her. "One day," she says, "I will return to my country and build a school, so that all the children, no matter how poor, will be able to have an education."

Sue E. Virgili

"Whatever it brings, my educational roots are in the opportunity ABE provided, and my future in the process of lifelong learning".

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FAYETTE COUNTY

Sponsor: Marleen Maskara
Intermediate Unit 1 Adult Learning Center, Uniontown

When Sue Virgili walked into Intermediate Unit 1's Uniontown Adult Learning Center 22 years after walking out of her senior year in high school, her goal was to get a diploma in order to obtain first-time employment. With her husband laid-off from his job, her six sons growing up and going away to college and military service, she couldn't even get a job turning hamburgers at McDonalds. Driving the 25 miles to the center three days a week gave her plenty of time to think about what might be ahead for her. She discovered a curiosity within and, with encouragement from her teachers, decided to expand her goals.

After passing the GED with a score of 329, Sue enrolled in undergraduate studies at California University of Pennsylvania. She began juggling family obligations and church commitments with her new role as a non-traditional student. She became treasurer for the high school football boosters and faced a family health crisis when her son was severely injured in a football incident. She added volunteer service to the Greene County 4-H Horse and Pony Club when her son changed his focus from football. Her family supported her decision to return to school by helping out around the house, thus allowing her the time she needed to study.

ABE classes prepared her to go from a high school dropout to a college graduate. At her college commencement in May 1994, Sue could look back on many accomplishments: twice named Presidential Scholar; nominated for the Communication Student award; published author; member of the Public Relations Club and the Omicron Psi Honor Society; selected as recipient of a photography award; articles published in the university newspaper; and graduation as a 3.84 honor student. Sue recalls, "It was a greater achievement than I could have imagined when I walked in the front door of the Adult Learning Center in March 1990."

As an outreach specialist for the Community Action Southwest WIC Program, she is sensitive to the program's participants in their struggles to achieve because she understands their problems in a very personal way. She continually encourages WIC staff to make referrals to ABE programs and has revised the bi-monthly WIC newsletter, moving it from its previous reading grade level of 14 to a more appropriate level of eight.

She keeps in touch with the Uniontown Adult Learning Center and speaks to ABE students about what they can accomplish. She also talks to teachers in a graduate studies program for reading specialists about their part in their students' accomplishments. In 1996, she plans to accept an assistantship in the Department of Communication Studies at California University of Pennsylvania. She believes that earning a master's degree will open a new window of learning and opportunity. Sue says, "Whatever it brings, my educational roots are in the opportunity ABE provided and my future in the process of lifelong learning".

Khamphanh Soulinhavong

"My ESL class at work makes my job easier. I can talk with my supervisor and workers better. I can understand and do my job better. I hope to get a big promotion."

LACKAWANNA COUNTY

Sponsor: Molly Quinn Philbin
Scranton Council for Literacy Advance

In 1979, one year after Khamphanh (Phanh) Soulinhavong completed high school, political unrest in Laos forced his family to flee to a refugee camp in Thailand. In 1981, they immigrated to the United States, and Phanh, age 20, enrolled in high school although he knew not a word of English. When he turned 21, he was asked to attend GED classes instead. Two years later, he was hired by Poly Hi Solidur Menasha Corporation, where he has worked ever since.

In February 1994, Scranton Council for Literacy Advance (SCOLA) started an ESL Workplace program for 13 of the company's Laotian employees. The goal was to improve communication skills between this group and their supervisors. Classes were held twice a week from January to June 1994, and Phanh attended every class. Mary Jane Hoffman, his instructor, noted that, "Phanh not only attended, but actively participated in class." She depended on him to bring the group back after break and to silence other class members who sometimes spoke Laotian during class. In addition, she observed Phanh helping students with weaker English skills. His efforts in this area helped build a class cohesiveness that aided in retention.

Gary Durkin, one of Phanh's supervisors, commented that Phanh, "can now follow written instructions without confusion and keep written log records as well." He attributed this new found ability to Phanh's attendance at class, coupled with his determination to follow the excellence goals established by his employer. He added, "Phanh's pleasant and friendly personality helps him to influence other employees positively, which makes for smooth and efficient work transitions because management knows that Phanh will interact well with any given employee under his direction." Otto Goetzl, Phanh's other supervisor, mentioned Phanh's improved verbal skills, "He can be assertive, but always a gentleman who knows when to speak and does so tactfully." These skills have enhanced his leadership role at the company, where he is now operator of Press Number 1 with one or two employees under him.

One of Phanh's personal goals is to move up the corporate ladder. Toward that end, he attends employer- sponsored training and learns how to operate other presses at the plant. He is willing to work late shifts and solve operational problems. He currently is working with the workplace coordinator to arrange for a tutor to work towards a GED with him.

Phanh has been married for several years and is the father of a two-year-old girl. He is a leader of his extended family and organizes many Laotian community events. He relates well to native-born Americans and converses with non-Laotians, particularly about sports. These conversations have increased as a result of Phanh's attendance at class. The cost of this class is now covered by his company, not PDE, because of the positive feedback from supervisors to upper management. Further recognition was bestowed upon this class in the form of "Kudos," which were published in The LOG, the company's quarterly publication.

Margaret George

"I was ashamed when I couldn't read and write. People laughed at me and called me names. Now my relatives are proud of me and tell me to 'keep going.' I like learning."

LUZERNE COUNTY

Sponsors: Regina Baron, Margaret Rood and Debra Trulock
Luzerne County Community College
IDEA/Adult Literacy Training and Assistance Program

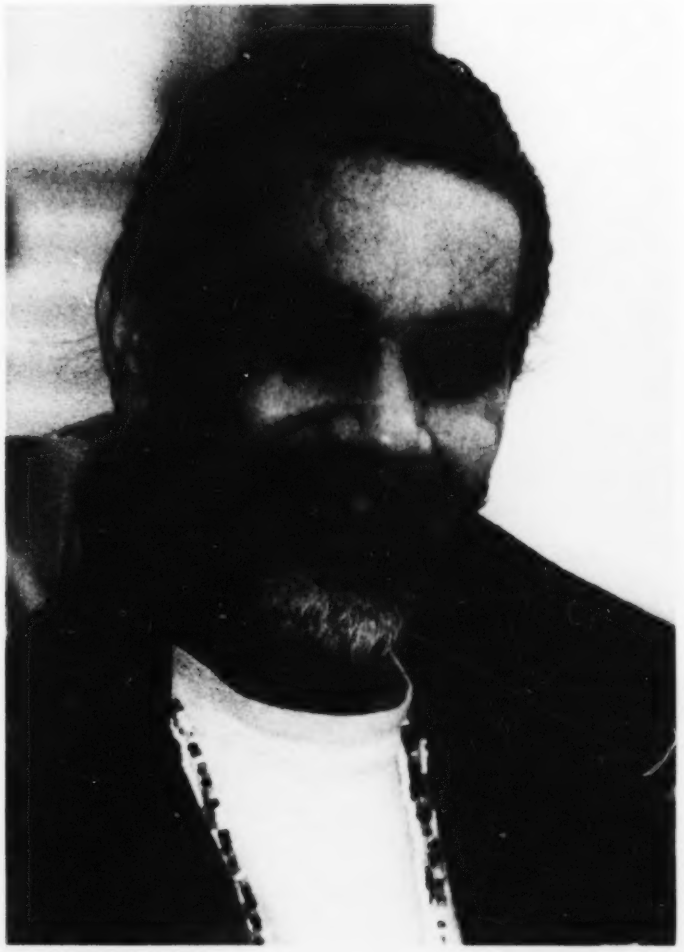
Margaret George is a 57-year-old grandmother whose thirst for knowledge has created a determination to succeed. In the 8th grade, Margaret left special education classes to begin a family. At the age of 50, after raising 11 children, Margaret, a widow, decided to return to school and contacted the Luzerne County Community College's Adult Literacy Training and Assistance Program (ALTA). At enrollment, her reading ability was at a primer/first-grade level. She only had knowledge of beginning sounds and recognition of all letters of the alphabet. Over the years, she has worked diligently to increase her sight and reading vocabulary, context and comprehension. Currently, she reads fluently and accurately at a 4th-grade-level and is striving consistently to become a better reader. She uses a dictionary to assist her and has begun writing letters and short paragraphs.

Dependent on public transportation, Margaret always has been resourceful in finding a way to class. Over the last seven years, she has attended classes in various locations depending on where she was living. When she didn't have the money to pay for transportation, she sought out means of obtaining funds. Currently, she pays for a taxi twice a week to come to class.

Margaret's love of children has been a great influence in her determination to read. She loves to read to her 27 grandchildren. Since her classes are in the Head Start building, she has been reading to the children there once a week on her own time since March 1994. The children love listening to Margaret as much as she enjoys reading to them. Plans are being made to include her in the school library corner. Originally, Margaret planned to become a nurse's aide or an aide to the elderly. However, since becoming involved with the Head Start children, she hopes to find employment in a day care setting.

Over the past seven years, Margaret has overcome many personal problems. Death, sickness and a host of family and personal problems have had an enormous effect on her. Through it all, she has bounced back with the determination and confidence needed to achieve her goals. There have been times when she had to put other concerns before her education, but she has never allowed her misfortunes to get the better of her. Margaret is an inspiration to many. Her caring and determination shine throughout the class. She always is willing to help others with their studies and often sits and listens to classmates read. She has encouraged others when they were down and lets them know that they can do it, just as she has.

William Torres



"There's nothing that you cannot achieve if you try hard for it. Be responsible and go for it."

NORTHAMPTON COUNTY

Sponsor: Twila S. Evans
Northampton Community College

When William Torres entered Northampton County Prison in April 1994, he was 37-years-old, unemployed, had held unskilled and semi-skilled jobs, and had a long history of drug addiction. Willie was married with three children aged 3, 14 and 16, but family relationships were broken. In August 1994, he made a commitment to "be more responsible" and to "better his relationships at home." He was enrolled in the new treatment unit, which included ABE classes; the family literacy program, "When Bonds are Broken;" addiction awareness; psychological awareness; Latino D & R; relapse prevention; and counseling.

Although he had completed 10 years of school and was bilingual, Willie had an 8th-grade reading level, and 3rd grade math and 2nd grade language scores. His learning style strengths were reading, listening and visualizing. In addition to the treatment program, ABE and family literacy classes, he was provided with a weekly tutor. Willie took part in a workplace literacy program, passed the GED test and earned a certificate with "honors" for his improved scores on the ETS Tests of Applied Literacy Skills and his demonstrated leadership.

In all these endeavors, Willie showed a growing capacity to understand himself and to use his understandings to provide support for others. His quiet and encouraging performance earned him the respect of his peers. He volunteered to assist as a translator/tutor in ESL classes. Throughout his incarceration, he had remained drug-free and patient with the judicial process of resolving charges in two different counties. He assisted others in attempting to deal with their present circumstances in a similar manner. The staff chose him to be a member of the Resident Counseling Board responsible for assisting with the management of the treatment unit.

A family liaison worker visited his family during the course of the year and his wife brought the children for their first visit. When the children reported to their mother that "Dad did want to change and was .. even going to school," she also began to attend their regular visits and enrolled in a Caretaker class. She has become a strong supporter of the other caretakers and encourages them to "take care of themselves and to get their education." A tutor was provided for Willie's 13-year-old son who was having difficulties at school and was incurring "brushes" with the law.

Willie has diligently studied on a daily basis and fully participated in his treatment plan. He has remained drug-free, earned his GED, grown in self esteem and feelings of self-worth, begun the process of healing the bonds with his children and has demonstrated a quiet, firm and supportive leadership with his peers. As a result, he has been placed on a work-release program that will allow him to seek employment and provide community service.

Elaine Handline

"I made a good effort. So can you!"

MONTGOMERY COUNTY

Sponsor: Kathleen Marks
Eagleville Hospital

Elaine Handline was one of eight children. Raised in a home with an alcoholic father who frequently abused his wife and children, she grew up anxious and lacking self-esteem. At age 17, she married a man who was an alcoholic and an abuser. After 15 years, she left this marriage with three children and a court- protection order. This pattern of self-destruction persisted with another marriage to an alcohol-abusing man. Along the way, she too had become an alcoholic. At the age of 42, she was an uneducated person who had left school in the 11th grade and had few positive job opportunities.

Elaine turned to Eagleville Hospital for help stating, "I'm tired of being a drunk." Several times during the intake process she insisted, "I want to get my GED." Elaine worked hard in treatment overcoming her pattern of self-destruction, her lack of self-respect and her need to be the "people pleaser" and the "care giver" so typical of adult children of alcoholics. Treatment is difficult enough to accomplish without adding pressures, but Elaine also worked hard in the schoolhouse and was very goal-directed. When she completed treatment, she also had earned her GED diploma..

She returned to the home of her third husband where she cared for her mother-in-law until her death. Approximately one year following her discharge, Elaine started college. She pursued her degree while caring for her mother-in-law, volunteering at a local hospital and working as a secretarial assistant. When asked what difficulties she encountered, Elaine merely stated "weak study habits." She received several certificates from the Philadelphia Community College Women's Program for Student Leadership and Student Activities having represented her peers in the student organization for three years. She also received a certificate from Northeastern Hospital recognizing her 137 volunteer hours in 1994. In 1995, she was awarded a Governor's Proclamation in recognition of her volunteer service. Elaine had not forgotten where it all began. She sent her teachers at Eagleville Hospital inspirational messages, cards and her Brag Book to be shared with their other students. On the first page of Elaine's book was a copy of her IMAGE AWARD ("I made a good effort") received when she completed the program.

Elaine completed her associate degree in General Studies from Philadelphia Community College in June 1994, graduating with high honors. Having received her acceptance into the School of Social Services, she had plans to earn a master's degree in social services serving the elderly. She held two part-time jobs despite undergoing chemotherapy for cancer. In September 1995, when she was nominated for this award, Elaine was out of the hospital, back to work and back at school. In November 1995, Elaine died of cancer never knowing that she had been chosen an oustanding adult student.

Tracey White

Through self-reliance,
I was able to obtain
a formal education.
Through
self-determination,
I shall go
even further."

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PHILADELPHIA COUNTY

Sponsor: Hannah Ashley
Germantown Women's Educational Project

Tracey White completed 10th grade in 1983, became pregnant with her first son and spent the next 10 years supporting herself and her children with jobs ranging from security guard to receptionist to freelance caterer. She often worked two jobs, some at night. In the fall of 1993, she enrolled in adult classes at the Germantown Women's Educational Project (GWEP) and spent the next two years studying for and taking GED tests one at a time. She plans to take her final test December 1995 and needs only 35 more points to complete her GED.

Over the past two-and-a-half years, her belief in herself has blossomed and she has become a leader. She always can be seen leaning over another learner's book explaining how to count decimal places or waiting patiently as someone sounds out a word. She has challenged others when she hears a prejudiced remark in a class discussion and speaks out about her beliefs on drug rehabilitation or welfare reform.

While attending career planning sessions, Tracey learned about Philadelphia Women's Opportunities Resource Center. This center offers support for people who want to start their own business. Tracey attended several seminars, including Financial Aid for Small Businesses and Women's Business Ownership. She then placed advertisements in local papers, made flyers and business cards, got her company bonded and insured. Within several weeks, she started receiving phone calls for her home and office cleaning business. At its peak, the business provided work for three people including students from the center.

Tracey has combined learning with achieving her professional goals by applying techniques practiced in group sessions on job interviewing. She uses professional language, clearly establishes the limits of the work and plans for child care during work hours. While she sees home and office cleaning as a way to get experience in running a business, it is not a lifelong goal. She always has wanted to be a professional in the culinary arts, perhaps as a chef or owner of a catering business, and participates in a class on cooking and nutrition as preparation for further study. As a long-term goal, she would like to establish a soup kitchen in her neighborhood. She also has thought about applying her desire to help others to social work and currently is exploring options for further education, including college in both of her fields of interest.

A member of the PTA and volunteer in her children's classroom, she is on the GWEP Board of Directors, is a past co-president of the Student-Staff liaison group, and has acted as a promoter of the program in newspaper and videos, and public events, such as a presentation at Border's Bookstore. After Tracey gets her GED, she hopes to become a tutor and has applied for a student internship.

1996 OUTSTANDING ADULT STUDENTS

Front row (left to right): Sister Yolanda Martinez, Linda Mallory, Margaret George, and Sue Virgili. Back row (left to right): George Benditt, Khamphanh Soulinhavong, Willie Torres, and Bruce Harris. Elaine Handline and Tracey White are missing from the picture.

PAACE

These students were honored at COABE '96 which was co-sponsored by the Commission on Adult Baasic Education, the American Association for Adult and Continuing Education (AAACE), the Pennsylvania Association for Adult and Continuing Education (PAACE) and the Pennsylvania Department of Education, Bureau of Adult Basic and Literacy Education (ABLE).

PAACE's membership includes teachers, tutors, counselors, professors, administrators, librarians, students and volunteers who work with adult learners in institutions of basic and higher education businesses and community agencies. In addition to an annual Midwinter Conference, PAACE sponsors special interest sections, publishes a newsletter, journal and membership directory. It is affiliated with AAACE.

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